

Message Text

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ACTION DPW-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 RSR-01 IO-12 OMB-01 SSO-00 /116 W

----- 031614

R 271214 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3278

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CMDR JCRC NKP THAI

CHUSDEL FPJMC SAIGON

JHRC CLARK AFB

CINCPAC

USDEL FRANCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 2271

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

U/ PW FOR SIEVERTS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, CASC, LA

SUBJECT: TRAVELS OF LPF NEGOTIATORS AND POW RELEASE

1. ICC/ LAOS CANDEL HAMMILL RECEIVED NOTIFICATION FROM ICCS SAIGON THAT HE WAS NOT TO GO TO HANOI TO ACCEPT RELEASE OF CANADIAN POW OPPEL FROM LAOS. INSTEAD, HE WAS TOLD THAT CANADIAN EMBASSY OFFICER FROM MANILA WILL BE ABOARD C-141 AIRCRAFT AND THAT OPPEL WILL PROCEED TO CLARK AFB WITH NINE AMERICAN POW' S TO BE RELEASED MARCH 28.

2. HAMMILL SAID DRV HAD REQUESTED REGULAR ICC TUESDAY FLIGHT TO OVERNIGHT IN VIENTIANE MARCH 27-28 AND PROCEED TO GIA LAM FROM VIENTIANE AT 0600 HOURS MARCH 28. THUS, LPF DEL CHIEF PHOUN
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SIPRASEUTH WILL NOT RETURN TO VIENTIANE UNTIL MARCH 28, RATHER THAN EVENING OF MARCH 27 AS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED.

3. COMMENT: EARLY DEPARTURE OF ICC FLIGHT FROM VIENTIANE WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR LARGE NUMBERS OF NEWSMEN NOW IN VIENTIANE TO OBSERVE TURNOVER OF US AND CANADIAN PW' S CAPTURED IN LAOS SCHEDULED FOR 0900 HOURS MARCH 28 AT GIA LAM, IF THIS IS DRV INTENTION. WE WERE ALSO INFORMED BY ROYAL AIR LAOS THAT THEIR ELECTRA IS CHARTERED BY CBS AND CLEARED BY DRV TO PROCEED TN NOL AND SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO RETURN TO CAMBODIA. ONE OF MATAK' S CLOSE COLLABORATORS, TEP KHUNNAH, NARROWLY ESCAPED A HAND GRENADE ATTACK. THE MARSHAL SUBSEQUENTLY GAVE KHUNNAH PERMISSION TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. FIFTEEN PRINCES AND PRINCESSES REMAIN UNDER ARREST AND AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF STUDENT AND TEACHER ACTIVISTS REMAIN IN HIDING OR UNDER ARREST. GENERAL NORODOM CHANTARANGSEY REPORTEDLY REFUSED A SUMMONS BY MARSHAL LON NOL, BUT THE CONFRONTATION WAS SOFTENED WHEN HE AGREED TO DROP THE ROYAL NAME OF NORODOM. MILITARY ACTIVITY WAS MARKED BY NEW KHMER INSURGENT ATTACKS AGAINST MAJOR GOVERNMENT LINES OF COMMUNICATION-

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THE MEKONG RIVER CORRIDOR, ROUTES 1, 4 AND 5. GOVERNMENT FORCES SUCCEEDED IN CLEARING ENEMY FROM RTE 2 BETWEEN PHNOM PENH AND
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TAKEO; FIGHTING CONTINUED IN SOUTHERN MR2. THE MEKONG RIVER CONVOY SCHEDULED FOR DEPARTURE TO PHNOM PENH ON 27 MARCH WAS POSTPONED INDEFINITELY.

POLITICAL (INTERNAL)

2. THE HEAD OF THE PRO- SIRIK MATAK INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN ASSOCIATION, TEP KHUNNAH, NARROWLY ESCAPED DEATH ON MARCH 25 WHEN TWO RIDERS ON A HONDA MOTORCYCLE PLACED A GRENADE IN KHUNNAH' S JEEP AS IT PASSED THE KOREAN EMBASSY. KHUNNAH THREW THE GRENADE INTO THE STREET, WHERE IT EXPLODED, INJURING TWO BYSTANDERS AND SLIGHTLY WOUNDING KHUNNAH. KHUNNAH TOLD AN EMBASSY OFFICER THAT HE HAD HAD INTIMATIONS OF AN IMPENDING ASSASSINATION' ATTEMPT FROM AN INFORMANT IN THE ORGANIZATION OF LON NON, HIS BITTER POLITICAY ENEMY. KHUNNAH WAS SUMMONED MARCH 26 WITH FOLLOW MATAKIST SENG BUN KORN TO CHAMCAR MON, WHERE KHUNNAH WAS GIVEN PERMISSION TO GO ABROAD. KHUNNAH PLANS TO LEAVE FOR PARIS SHORTLY.

3. THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVED ON MARCH 31 THE STATE OF NATIONAL

DANGER AS REQUIRED BY THE CONSTITUTION. ON MARCH 26 MARSHAL LON NOL SIGNED A DECREE, APPLICABLE DURING THE STATE OF SEIGE, PROVIDING PENALTIES OF DEMOTION OR DISMISSAL FOR CIVIL SERVANTS GUILTY OF INDISCIPLINE, DISRESPECT, FOR AUTHORITY, CORRUPTION, OPIUM SMOKING, GAMBLING, AND SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY.

4. THE MARSHAL ON MARCH 26 DECREED THE CREATION OF A " PERSONAL CABINET OF THE MARSHAL" TO BE DIRECTED BY A GENERAL AS YET UNNAMED AND CONSISTING OF A SMALL GROUP OF ADVISERS. PHNOM PENH RADIO PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED THAT A PLAN TO " RESHUFFLE AND OVER-HAUL" THE GROUP OF PRESIDENTIAL ASSISTANTS HAS BEEN IMPLEMENTED AS ONE OF THE 16 POINTS PRESENTED TO THE PARLIAMENT BY PRIME MINISTER HANG THUN HAK IN RESPONSE TO THE DEMANDS OF THE STRIKING TEACHERS. ON MARCH 27 THE PARLIAMENT ELECTED THE MENBERS OF THE " STATE CONTROL", A BODY PROVIDED UNDER THE CONSTITUTION FOR THE PURPOSE OF INVESTIGATING CASES OF CORRUPTION AND ABUSE OF POWER. PROMPT ELECTION OF THIS BODY WAS ANOTHER OF THE 16 POINTS OF HANG THUN HAK. THE DELAY IN THE CREATION OF THIS BODY HAD ENABLED THE GOVERNMENT TO RULE BY DECREE, A RIGHT NOW EXTENDED BY THE STATE OF DANGER.

5. LT. GENERAL SISOWATH SIRIK MATAK WAS PLACED UNDER A MILD
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FORM OF HOUSE ARREST, AN INITIAL GUARD OF SOME 200 TROOPS HAVING BEEN REDUCED THE NEXT DAY TO ABOUT THE USUAL 20. HIS TELEPHONE LINES WERE CUT. HE NEVERTHELESS GAVE AN INTERVIEW WITH CORRESPONDENTS OF THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE VOA IN WHICH HE DECLARED THAT THE TIME WHEN THE POPULARITY OF THE LON NOL GOVERNMENT COULD BE RESTORED HAD PASSED AND THAT SIHANOUK IS NOW MORE POPULAR THAN LON NOL AND SHOULD BE PERMITTED TO RETURN TO CAMBODIA. MATAK DISCLAIMED ANY INTENTION OF LEAVING THE COUNTRY.

6. AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF REGIME OPPONENTS REMAIN UNDER ARREST OR IN HIDING, AND A FEW HAVE BEEN REPORTED AS HAVING JOINED THE ENEMY. BRIG. GENERAL NORODOM CHANTARANGSEY REPORTEDLY REFUSED A SUMMONS TO THE MARSHAL AND PREPARED TO DEFEND HIMSELF AGAINST A GOVERNMENT POSSE AUGMENTED WITH APC' S, BUT AN UNEASY TRUCE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THIS NEXT MOST PROMINENT REPUBLICAN EX- PRINCE NOW PREVAILS. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION DESCRIBED HIS AS A FRIEND OF THE REPUBLIC AND CHANTARANGSEY AT THE REQUEST OF LON NOL BEGAN LEGAL STEPS TO DROP THE ROYAL FAMILY NAME OF NORODOM FROM HIS OWN.

POLITICAL
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JHRC CLARK AFB
MANILA
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SAIGON

SAIGON

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